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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2017

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PINS](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: ABBAS ORDERS DISSOLUTION OF FORCE 17

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) PA National Security Forces (NSF) commander Thiab Mustafa Ali told PolSpec October 7 that PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) instructed security chiefs to integrate Force 17 members into the Presidential Guard (PG) and NSF. BG Ali said the timeline for Force 17 integration/dissolution will be short, and all Force 17 weapons, vehicles and other equipment will be transferred to the PG and NSF. Not all Force 17 members will be integrated, he said; those unfit to carry out their duties will be removed from active service. Muhammad Abu Samara, acting Force 17 commander, will probably be retired, Ali said.

¶2. (S) BG Ali said President Abbas had ordered Force 17 to be integrated into the Special PG force (VIP/Critical Facility Protection) several months ago, but little action was taken until October 6. According to Ali, Force 17 members will be integrated on an individual basis, not as units, following screening for competency. Most will go into the PG; 100 currently deployed in Dahriya (southern Hebron) will be integrated into the NSF. Ali noted the precedent for integrating Force 17 personnel into the NSF, pointing to the few hundred who joined the NSF several months ago at the direction of then-NSA Muhammad Dahlan.

Comment

¶3. (S) Elimination of Force 17 as a separate security branch is a positive step in PA security forces (PASF) restructuring. If President Abbas' order is fully implemented, it will constitute progress toward fulfilling the PA's Roadmap obligation to reduce and realign their forces and contribute to clearer lines of responsibility among security branches.
WALLES